



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

25 Howard Avenue, Building 57

Cranston, RI 02920

Phone: (401) 462-2121 Fax: (401) 462-6594

November 18, 2020

Honorable Patricia A. Serpa, Chairwoman
House Committee on Oversight
101 State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Serpa:

Please accept the attached report as the State's most recent update on the RIBridges system, which covers the reporting period October 16, 2020 – November 15, 2020. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System performance and improvement
- DHS staffing and employee training
- Pending applications
- SNAP timeliness and lobby/DHS Call Center summaries
- CCAP off-cycle payments
- LTSS interim payments
- Correspondence with federal partners (if any)

We appreciate your continued advocacy on behalf of those we serve, your interest in the health of the RIBridges system and the progress made to address outstanding issues. As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CHAWKINS", written in a cursive style.

Courtney E. Hawkins, Director



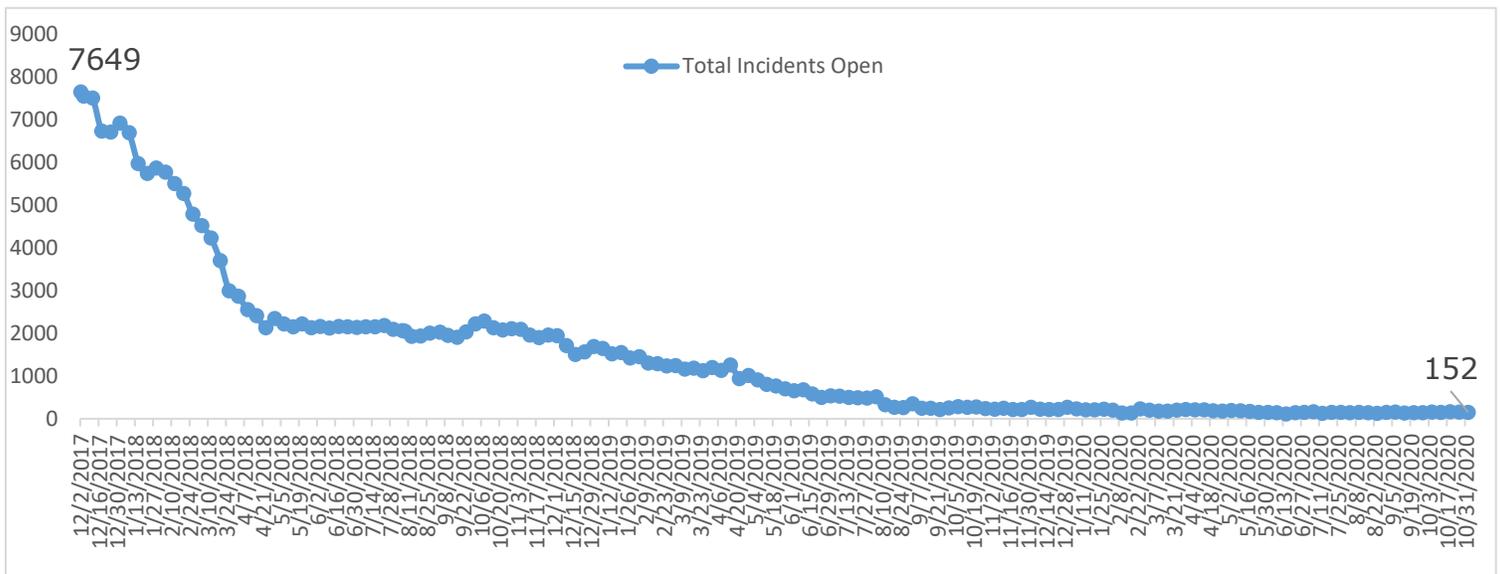
RI Bridges: Monthly Update

November 2020

Our team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life and being there for Rhode Islanders when needed. Our oversight of the work on the RI Bridges system is an important part of the equation. With system stabilization under our belt, we continue to focus on ensuring full compliance of the system. This report provides an update on our efforts and progress to date.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE + IMPROVEMENT

Due to a focused effort on consistent and stable system operations, the number of new and existing incidents (when the system does not operate as expected for a DHS customer, worker or provider) has decreased by 98 percent since December 2017. As of November 2, 2020, there were **152** open incidents.



DHS STAFFING

DHS continues to make progress in hiring candidates for critical positions identified. Since October, DHS hired one employee: a Human Services Business Officer dedicated to Financial Management.

DHS TRAINING

Training Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
SNAP Training (3 – 1.5-hour sessions)	10-21-2020	4.5	0	15
	10-28-2020			
	11-4-2020			
SNAP Mini Training: Students (1 – two- hour sessions)	10-16-2020	2	0	5
Case Maintenance (1 – 30 – minute session)	10-21-2020	.75	0	10
Introduction to MAGI	11-2-2020	2	0	8
RIW Mini Training: Adding a Pregnancy (1 -30-minute session)	10-7-2020	.50	0	10
RIW Mini Training: Adding a Pregnancy (1 -30-minute session)	11-2-2020	.5	0	2
RIW Mini Training: Adding a Newborn (1 -30-minute session)	10-21-2020	.5	0	3
RIW Mini Training: Relationship Requirement (1 -30-minute session)	11-4-2020	.5	0	2
RIW Mini Training: Non- Custodial Parent (1 -2-hour session)	10-28-2020	2	0	3
Multicultural Competency Training: Module One (3 -one and half hour sessions)	10-29-2020	4.5	0	51
	11-6-2020			
	11-12-2020			

Medical Premium Payment (2-3-hour sessions)	10-23-2020 10-26-2020	6	0	32
Health Income and Household Composition (2-3-hour sessions)	10-16-2020 10-19-2020	6	0	31
Health Insurance and Income (2-3-hour sessions)	11-6-2020 11-9-2020	6	0	13
Domestic Violence 101 (4-1.5 hours sessions)	10-20-2020 10-27-2020 11-4-2020 11-10-2020	6	0	62
Courageous Conversation Corner (2 – 1.5- hours sessions)	10-30-2020 11-13-2020	3	0	44
GPA One and Two (1 – 45-minute session)	10-23-2020	.75	0	16
FTI and HIPAA (3- 30 minutes sessions)	10-20-2020 10-21-2020 10-27-2020	1.5	0	25
Customer Relations Training (1 -1.5-hour session)	11-10-2020	1.5	0	16
Totals		48.5	0	348*

**current number of staff trained is a duplicate number*

Workshop Descriptions

Case Maintenance: This training focuses on standardizing processes associated with working cases in *RI Bridges*. It is a remote training delivered via Zoom. The learning outcomes for the training are as follows:

- Understand the case maintenance checklist
- Finding helpful documents
- Understand proper case maintenance practices

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP): The *SNAP* Training is designed to introduce Eligibility Technicians to *SNAP* program policy and *RI Bridges*. The virtual sessions are focused on *SNAP* policy.

Multicultural Competency Training: The Multicultural Competence modules offer contextualized, scaffolded, anti-oppression educational workshops for DHS employees. There are four foundational modules that introduce participants to frameworks, concepts, and strategies so DHS personnel are better equipped to advance diversity, equity and inclusion of strategic goals, individually and collectively. The workshops are offered virtually. Each session meets for 1.5-2 hours. The format includes facilitated dialogue activities with individuals and groups.

- **Module One:** *Advancing Anti-Oppression in the Workplace* is the first of the four workshops. This session presents and discusses the multicultural competencies necessary to advance anti-oppression in the workplace (e.g., awareness, understanding, knowledge, interaction, and sensitivity).

Introduction to MAGI: Participants will have acquired a foundation – especially those new to Medical determination – that will lay the foundation for a subsequent session incorporating introductory principles applicable to *RI Bridges*. This training session will serve as a hands-on process to combine theory with practice.

Following the conclusion of part one of Introduction to the *Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI)* program, participants will have an increased familiarity with government-provided health insurance programs of the past and present at the federal and state levels, general concepts of eligibility criteria, special population eligibility and the application process for DHS.

SNAP Mini Training Student: The audiences for this training are eligibility and supervisory staff. This training reviews policy surrounding student status, income, and eligibility. It includes a hands-on segment to practice the correct inputting of student information into *RI Bridges*.

Rhode Island Works (RIW) Mini Trainings: The *RI Works* Mini-Series is a four-part series designed to provide participants with snapshots of information for *RIW* non-financial eligibility factors.

- Adding a Pregnancy – participants will learn about 3rd trimester pregnancy as a special circumstance and how this a gateway for eligibility for moms with no children in the home.
- Relationship Requirements – participants will hear how relationship impacts eligibility for *RIW* and what the term *Loco Parentis* means. When the relative with whom the child lives with is not the biological or adoptive parent, the term *in loco parentis* (in place of the parent) is used.
- Adding a Newborn – participants will gain an understanding of what information is collected at the time of birth and why it matters.
- Non-Custodial Parent Information – participants will Learn why collecting NCP data matters and the role of the Office of Child Support Services when collecting NCP information.

GPA Burial (1 and 2): These trainings focus on introducing ESSU staff to *GPA Burial*, including a program overview, a description of the *GPA Burial* application requirements and a demo of processing the application in *RI Bridges*. It is the first and second parts of a four-part series.

FTI/HIPAA: This is a required training for all DHS employee. This refresher training covers the federal regulations and internal procedures that staff need to follow in protecting customer information.

Medical Premium Payment: Participants will understand the history of the *Katie Beckett* program and its impact on disabled children under the *Medicaid* state plan. Participants will understand the process flow for a *Katie Beckett* application and the policy surrounding this program. Participants will view *Katie Beckett* cases in the Integrated Eligibility System (IES) to understand what a pending and an approved *Katie Beckett* case will look like when entered.

Income and Health Insurance: This training covers the policy surrounding income, including income disregards and exclusions for *Medicaid* and Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) applications and renewals. Participants will understand how to compare an applicant’s income to income standards as well as be able to enter income into the IES system.

Health Insurance and Household Composition: This session covers the topic of determining household size for Integrated Health Care Coverage groups with additional topics for managed care and privacy. Participants will discuss policy as well as practice a case in the training environment.

Courageous Conversation Corner: A safe space for DHS staff members to discuss issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Customer Relations Training: This training provides information for DHS staff members on strategies to build their customer service skills.

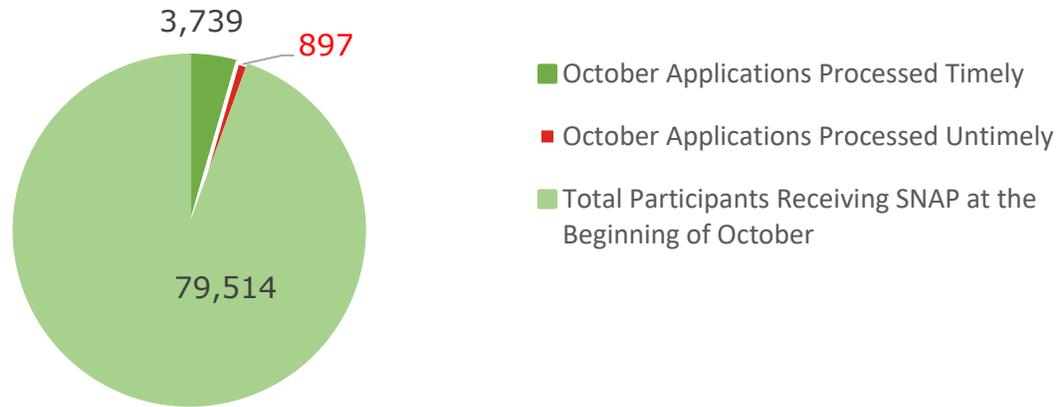
PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of October 5, 2020, the number of pending new applications across all programs was 3,847. The total of overdue, pending applications awaiting state action was 1,384.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Expedited	4	52	56	21	57	78	134
SNAP Non-Expedited	653	460	1,113	103	53	156	1,269
CCAP	9	96	105	6	20	26	131
GPA Burial	0	1	1	0	1	1	2
SSP	0	2	2	0	9	9	11
GPA	17	13	30	20	31	51	81
RIW	94	91	185	26	60	86	271
Undetermined Medical	6	262	268	37	900	937	1,205
Medicaid-MAGI	0	2	2	24	29	53	55
MPP	7	36	43	2	6	8	51
Complex Medicaid	7	20	27	11	85	96	123
LTSS	52	321	373	8	133	141	514
Totals	849	1,356	2,205	258	1,384	1,642	3,847

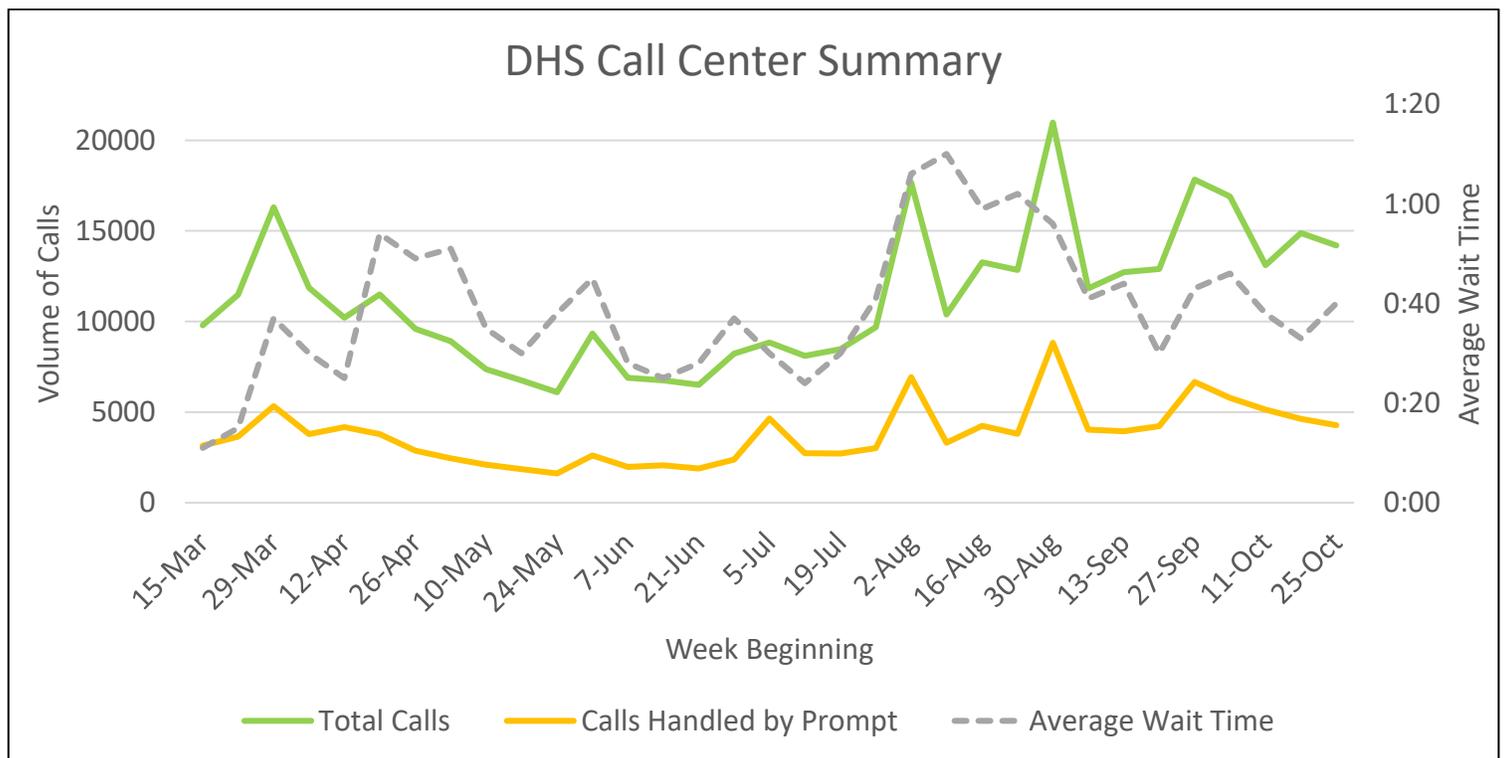
SNAP TIMELINESS

In October 2020, SNAP benefits were issued timely to nearly 79,514 households. Despite the impact of COVID-19, more than 80 percent of new SNAP applications were timely processed. The number of applications not timely processed represents less than 1 percent of the SNAP population receiving benefits.



CALL CENTER

In September 27 through the first week of November 2020, the average wait time was just shy of 40 minutes. With the close of lobby facing operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the DHS Call Center capacity was increased to accommodate customer interviews and questions regarding benefits.



CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

Below are the total number of batch payments made to child care providers between 8/11 – 9/10/2020.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
10	10/20/2020	569	\$2,420,825
10A	10/22/2020	12	\$43,162
10B	10/29/2020	17	\$14,524
11	11/04/2020	571	\$2,322,801
11A	11/05/2020	8	\$23,100
11B	11/12/2020	27	\$28,731

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (10, 10A, 0B)	598	\$2,478,511
Off-cycle (10A & 10B)	29	\$57,686
Provider off-cycle/total	4.85%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	2.32%	-

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (11, 11A, 11B)	606	\$2,374,632
Off-cycle (11A & 11B)	35	\$51,831
Provider off-cycle/total	5.78%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	2.18%	-

LTSS INTERIM PAYMENTS

We continue to make progress in reducing the LTSS backlog of applications. As of this submission, there are 133 overdue LTSS applications pending state action.

Through the contingency process, which ensures nursing and assisted living facilities receive prompt reimbursement from the State, Rhode Island has paid out approximately \$194,000 in interim payments to facilities for the State Fiscal Year 2021. The fiscal year for 2021 began on July 1, 2020.

Our payment reconciliation process remains ongoing as we continue to meet with long term care facilities across the state. In total, the State has paid approximately \$149 million, and we have collected about \$100 million in reconciliation payments so far from nursing home facilities. This represents approximately 67 percent of the total amount of contingency payments made.

UPDATE ON RECERTIFICATIONS PROCESS

The State has verified that Medicaid renewals were appropriately initiated by the RIBridges System in compliance with the CMS approved renewal plan.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are important partners to the State. We continue to communicate regularly to review progress with the RIBridges system. There were no UHIP related correspondences with our federal partners during this reporting period.